

November 25, 1985

Mr. Jon Westling
Provost
Boston University

Dear Jon:

We as senior members of the faculty of the College of Communications wish to express our support for Dean Redmont's position with regard to the University's involvement in the proposed program for Afghan journalists.

4 We reaffirm our view that the program as originally envisaged is sound. We would be pleased to participate in a journalism education program for Afghan journalists which would take place at the university, which would observe the normal standards and requirements for all international students attending the College of Communications, and which would take into account the historical tragedy now engulfing the Afghan nation because of the Soviet invasion.

We are also unanimously of the view that a program conducted in Peshawar could not be satisfactorily administered, would be open to infiltration and surveillance by agents of the KGB, the Iranian government, and other governments hostile to the United States, and would pose serious risks to the reputation of the University and the College. The gravest risk is that the program would be seen by the outside world and by the American academic community as not an educational enterprise at all but as a venture in propaganda and counterintelligence.

We recommend that President Silber take up this matter at the highest levels with the director of the United States Information Agency and with the White House. A most useful, long-term undertaking to assist the Afghan people in recovering their independence is in danger of being compromised by a misplaced zeal for short-term results. Before Afghanistan was attacked in 1979, it did not have a strong independent press with professional standards and traditions. Such a press cannot be swiftly created under ideal conditions. It certainly cannot be nurtured in the turmoil of a refugee center awash with secret agents, rival political factions, and intense emotions. We believe that President Silber can make this clear to the appropriate officials and get this project back on track. If sound logic does not prevail in Washington, we believe that it would be most imprudent for the University to involve itself.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

William V. Shannon
George Blumenthal
James Freeman
Joe Rago
Carol Rivers
Bruce R. Bush
TR Spillane
Jack Tyler
Jeremy Murray